is producing an exportable safety film, for example, that will help airborne units conduct safer airborne operations.

These safety measures are only a few examples of the way a unit can improve its safety record. No matter what type of training a unit may conduct, there is always room for improvement. All it takes is some common sense, a little imagination, and the will to succeed. By identifying problem areas, developing solutions, and emphasizing those solutions, a unit can see results. Those results may not be dramatic, but where safety is concerned any improvement at all is worth the effort.

Kangaroo 89
U.S. Light Infantry in the Outback

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COLE C. KINGSEED

The mission of a light infantry force is to deploy rapidly to defeat enemy forces in a low intensity conflict and, when properly augmented, also to fight and win in a mid or high intensity conflict. No exercise has demonstrated the ability of a light force to accomplish its low intensity mission more clearly than during Kangaroo 89, the largest peacetime military exercise in Australia since World War II.

This joint combined exercise, set in northern Australia, involved more than 20,000 men and women from the Australian Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as a light infantry task force from the 25th U.S. Infantry Division (Light). This light infantry task force formed the nucleus of more than 1,800 members of the United States armed forces who took part.

In addition to the inherent value of the exercise to Australia's Defense Force, Kangaroo 89 also served to further validate the U.S. light infantry division concept. Not only was the U.S. task force able to deploy rapidly to Australia's Northern Territory, but it also conducted low intensity operations for a sustained period in one of the world's harshest climates and on some of its harshest terrain.

The U.S. task force had unrivaled success in the Australian outback and learned many lessons that may benefit the rest of the light infantry community.

What the Australians call "low level" conflict bears striking similarities to our own concept of "low intensity" conflict. As defined in their doctrinal literature, "low level" conflict is that in which an opponent engages in politically motivated hostile acts ranging from non-violent infringements of Australia's sovereignty or interests to small-scale military actions against the country.

This level of conflict may arise with little or no warning and may not require direct military involvement. It includes operations against small scale air intrusions, harassment of local shipping, and limited harassment and raids by small groups.

Australian doctrine also includes "escalated low level" conflict, which is the upper limit of the way existing and prospective regional military capabilities might realistically be applied against the nation.

Essentially, in escalated low level conflict, an enemy supplements (or substitutes) unconventional tactics and forces with military units that are prepared to confront conventional forces directly. Such confrontation could include increased aerial or naval harassment, attacks on Northern Territory settlements and installations, and more intensive raids by land forces.

During Kangaroo 89, the spectrum of conflict rapidly moved from low level to escalated low level conflict. To counter an incursion from a mythical island nation, Australia deployed its 1st Division, its only active duty division, to the northern rim of the continent. Attached to the division's operational deployment force was the light infantry task force from the 25th Infantry Division. It consisted of the 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry, a 155-man howitzer battery, a company of UH60 Black Hawk helicopters, an Engineer platoon, a detachment from the division's Military Intelligence battalion (consisting of the long range surveillance detachment, a low-level voice intercept team, and a section of AN/TRQ-32s), a Stinger section, and a combat service support element.

Also included in the task force package were 18 key personnel upgrade program (KPUP) controllers and a civil affairs team from the 25th Division's CAPSTONE unit, the 445th Civil Affairs Company from California. Of special

note was the fact that the 4th Battalion, 87th Infantry was a fairly new COHORT unit with only four months on station in Hawaii at the time of deployment.

During the exercise, the units conducted sustained low level operations over extended distances for four consecutive weeks. The Australian division's units traversed an area of operations that spanned 3,000 kilometers, and the U.S. task force typically was assigned an area of operations 90 kilometers square. Such a vast area presented a light infantry battalion with an entirely new series of challenges.

During the course of the month-long exercise, the U.S. task force conducted most of the missions in its tactical mission essential task list (METL) in a low intensity environment. The offensive missions included search and attack, air assault, deliberate attack, hasty attack, raid, and movement to contact. The defensive operations included defense in sector and defense from a battle position. In addition, the task force conducted sustainment operations, including the treatment and evacuation of casualties and aerial and ground resupply.

The extensive after action review that the leaders and soldiers conducted throughout the field training exercise helped me immensely in preparing the comments that follow. These comments are offered as observations, suggestions, or recommendations for future operations. Discussing them in the context of the battlefield operating systems will help convey an appreciation of the way this particular light task force succeeded in such a grueling environment.

Command and Control. We soon realized that long range communication systems were absolutely necessary. Although the homogeneity of the terrain facilitated direct FM communications over more than 70 kilometers with a single relay station, we needed improved high frequency radios, particularly to communicate with the Australian brigade headquarters to which the task force was attached. An Australian radio team that accompanied the task force throughout the tactical phase did improve interoperability.

As might be expected, the exercise was not without its share of flaws. The operators of all long range communication systems had to be trained extensively. Our improved high frequency radios (IHFR) were not fully effective because of their large radio frequency signature and the inordinate amount of power they required. Moreover, we had to spend some time to make sure that all of the systems were compatible during both the predeployment and deployment phases.

The area of operations itself dictated that the battalion decentralize most of its operations. As commanders operated within the conceptual framework of the task force commander's intent, this decentralization resulted in immediate success on the battlefield.

Interoperability with the Australian brigade headquarters proved no obstacle, because the leaders had exchanged and discussed standing operating procedures, operational and logistical reports, and requests for support before the tactical exercise began. The compatibility of equipment and the similarity of tactical language also eased the process.

Maneuver. This to us was the most striking feature of the exercise, because the long distances over which we operated and the ever-changing counterinsurgency scenario promoted improvised tactics. To ensure that the task force could react quickly and decisively to enemy sightings, we placed an immediate reaction platoon on strip alert with five minutes notice. A rifle company (minus) was prepared to augment this platoon on 30 minutes notification, and the brigade commander placed three UH60 aircraft under the operational control of the battalion task force commanders.

The wisdom of such an arrangement became immediately evident as the task force twice dispatched the company to destroy enemy platoon-sized forces on the fringe of the operational area, a distance of more than 70 kilometers. In both cases, the company commander received his operations order from the S-3 while in the aircraft on the way to the objective. In both operations, the availability of the immediate reaction force with aerial assets resulted in the complete destruction of the enemy force.

Other aspects of maneuver greatly contributed to the light infantry's success in taking the war directly to the enemy. TOW vehicles with squad automatic weapons, for example, and Military Police units performing their secondary roles of surveillance and security gave the task force mobility and firepower that it greatly needed.

The use of such technology as UH60 and OH58 helicopters, squad automatic weapons, night observation devices, the platoon early warning system, AN/TRQ-32s, tactical satellites, the positioning and azimuth determining system (PADS), and Engineer small emplacement excavators (SEEs) not only validated the technology-based light division concept, but also gave the infantry a distinct advantage over the opposing force it was facing.

The technology that most impressed the Australians was the task force's night vision capability. Not only were they amazed at our ability to conduct night

operations successfully, they also were surprised at the number of devices available in a light infantry battalion. Frequently, the UH60-mounted TOW sights and AN/PVS-7 night vision goggles identified insurgent teams at great distances and gave commanders timely intelligence to use in rapidly repositioning their forces to intercept and destroy the threat.

The maneuver lessons learned included the need to rehearse all immediate reaction force operations and to use the available light division technology to the utmost. Light infantry works and succeeds best during periods of limited visibility, when technology and the soldiers' stamina can make a difference.

Fire Support. Closely related to the maneuver lessons were certain important fire support lessons. Including the 155mm artillery battery in the task force paid dividends because of the vast area of operations. Unfortunately, the only Australian Chinook squadron had been decommissioned in the previous month, so there were no medium lift helicopters to transport the artillery battery and it had to move by roads or trails. Nevertheless, judicious planning by the battery commander, who frequently operated in a split configuration, gave us artillery coverage throughout the entire area of tactical operations.

To offset the lack of mobile artillery support, the battalion attached an 81mm mortar section to the immediate reaction force. This gave that force additional indirect fire support when it deployed away from the normal area of operations.

Intelligence. The most spectacular achievements of the task force resulted from its intelligence-gathering capabilities. We used all of our collection assets to the fullest. Good intelligence preparation of the battlefield, such as analyzing water resupply routes, aided in initially locating the bulk of the enemy force. When low level voice intercept and AN/TRQ-32 teams located an enemy command post, ground troops immediately sealed off the objective area and eliminated enemy resistance under cover of darkness.

Again, the use of the TOW system with its available night sights enabled the force to maintain continual surveillance of the enemy. In addition, battalion scouts and the long range surveillance detachment operated at distances of 70 and 200 kilometers, respectively, from the tactical operation center. The establishment of forward area rearm/refuel points (FARPs) together with the use of aerial communications ensured that those soldiers were well supplied and could continue to provide immediate intelligence on enemy forces.

With respect to intelligence collection, our experience in Kangaroo 89 validated many of the lessons that had been learned by light battalions at the combat training centers. For example, commanders must teach their staffs how to collate the information that arrives in the TOC from numerous sources. A good IPB is also critical to success on the battlefield. By identifying tactical areas of interest (TAIs) and named areas of interest (NAIs), we were able to pre-position forces to act or react when needed. The long range surveillance detachment performed splendidly, but expanding it from four teams to six would have given the division commander a more valuable intelligence-gathering capability.

Air Defense. Since the exercise was based on low level conflict, the air defense threat was relatively low, and our Stinger teams were more than enough to counter any enemy threat.

Mobility, Countermobility, and Survivability. Engineer assets, on the other hand, played an integral role in the battalion's success. The inclusion of light sapper teams and two SEE vehicles gave it an edge in mobility and countermobility that became the envy of the Australians.

The Engineer platoon received some of the most realistic training of any unit in the task force. It constructed landing zones, roads, and a Caribou airstrip, and conducted numerous mine-clearing operations. The only problem the platoon encountered during the entire exercise was the fragility of the SEEs' tires. A total of five tires were blown during the month-long exercise.

Combat Service Support. Lastly, the combat service support (CSS) elements witnessed some major accomplishments. Attaching themselves to a foreign service support system was a remarkable achievement, and by coordinating their efforts with the Australian's support organization, these CSS elements were able to provide continuous support for the U.S. task force.

The light division's forward area support coordinator (FASCO) concept worked well in most cases, and the HMMWV (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle) proved its reliability and versatility throughout the entire field problem. In addition, cross attaching mess teams helped in the preparation of meals.

Although the task force discovered that the authorized stockage list (ASL) that accompanied the battalion was inadequate, insisting that the commander approve the final ASL can remedy that problem in the future.

Kangaroo 89 clearly demonstrated the ability of light infantry forces to deploy rapidly and conduct coalition warfare. We made a number of valuable discoveries:

- Young COHORT soldiers can assimilate small unit tactics and build cohesion and teamwork through extended field operations.
- The use of technology can make a dramatic difference and can result in a disproportionate number of enemy casualties.
- The toughness and tenacity of light fighters over extended time and distance can ensure success on the low intensity battlefield.
- Offense-minded leaders and innovative tactics can carry the battle to the enemy and keep him off balance.
- Our units can adapt to the SOPs of other nations to improve interoperability and command and control.

Most important, Kangaroo 89 validated the light infantry division concept of deploying rapidly and fighting and winning in a low intensity conflict.

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